



Constitution Day Edition



Michigan Supreme Court Learning Center Educator Newsletter



Constitution Day

On September 17, 1787, delegates signed the U.S. Constitution. To commemorate this historical event, federal law requires schools that receive federal funding and all federal agencies to hold programs about the Constitution on or near that date each year. Below is a “best of” set of resources featured in past issues of [Justitia](#), the Learning Center’s educator e-newsletter.

Constitutions Online

[Constitution, Charters of Freedom](#) National Archives

[Interactive Constitution](#) National Constitution Center

[Michigan Constitution \(Current and Historical\)](#) Michigan Legislature

Fast Constitution Facts

U.S. Constitution	Michigan Constitution of 1963
Signed September 17, 1787. World's oldest written constitution still in effect	Written, 1961–62; adopted, 1963; supersedes state constitutions of 1835, 1850, and 1908
Begins with “We the People”	Begins with “We the People”
Defines the roles and powers of three branches of government	Defines the roles and powers of three branches of government
Lists rights of the people in the Bill of Rights, amendments adopted in 1791	Lists rights of the people in the Declaration of Rights in Article 1, directly following the Preamble

At the Learning Center

The Michigan Supreme Court Learning Center, a hands-on gallery in the Hall of Justice, offers tours and events, like Constitution Day, for the public. Tours are weekdays, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. (except state holidays).

Call to schedule today!
517-373-7171

At courts.mi.gov/learningcenter

The Educator Resources page includes an array of information and lessons. See the [Constitutions](#) page for Constitution Day resources and links.



Michigan Supreme Court Learning Center · PO Box 30048 · Lansing, MI 48909 · 517-373-7171 | © 2016, Michigan Judicial Institute
You received this newsletter because you registered at courts.mi.gov/learningcenter or participated in a Michigan Supreme Court Learning Center tour or program. If you no longer wish to subscribe, please email LearningCenter-eNews@courts.mi.gov.

Examining the Constitution



Do you ask your students to examine facsimile or electronic copies of original documents? Many high-resolution versions of the U.S. Constitution, Bill of Rights, and Michigan Constitution are available online. Some sites have exciting zoom features, while others allow downloading or printing. If you prefer a low-tech option, you could even purchase paper facsimiles.

Students enjoy working in pairs or triads as they decipher the historical handwriting. It may be helpful to supply typed transcripts or assign older students to transcribe certain sections and compare their findings, since the task can be challenging.

To use online documents, you will need electronic devices, preselected websites that feature original documents, and typed transcripts. For paper documents, you will need printed or purchased facsimiles, typed transcripts, and magnifying glasses.

Websites with Original Documents

[Zoom in on the U.S. Constitution](#) and [Zoom in on the Bill of Rights](#), Colonial Williamsburg

[Constitution Primary Source Set](#), Library of Congress

[Charters of Freedom, High-Resolution Downloads](#), National Archives and Records Administration

[Michigan Constitution of 1835](#) (image), Archives of Michigan at [SeekingMichigan.org](#)

Which Constitution?

Michigan's judges swear (or affirm) to uphold the Michigan Constitution and the U.S. Constitution, so they must have detailed knowledge of both. How much do you know about these two important documents?

(Answers below.)

	U.S.	Mich.
1) World's oldest written constitution.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2) Approved by voters in 1963.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3) Defines three branches of government.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4) Begins "We the people . . ."	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5) Protects the rights of those accused of crimes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6) Protects the rights of crime victims.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7) Guarantees the right of trial by jury.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Answers: 1) U.S., 2) Mich., 3) Both, 4) Both, 5) Both, 6) Mich., 7) Both.

Writing a Classroom Constitution

In the [We the Students](#) lesson from the Constitutional Rights Foundation of Chicago, students use the U.S. Constitution as a model to write their own preamble and “articles” (rules) for their classroom.

Using Primary Sources

Constitution Day is the perfect time to introduce students of all levels to primary sources! The following websites offer resources and ideas for teaching with our nation’s and state’s founding documents.

[Constitution Day Primary Source Tool Kit](#) Library of Congress

[Docs Teach: Revolution and the New Nation](#) National Archives

[Teaching with Documents: Observing Constitution Day](#) National Archives

Close-Reading the Constitution

A number of resources are available for close-reading the Constitution at different grade levels.

Elementary

[Teaching Democracy: What Is the Purpose of the Preamble?](#) Cal Humanities and the California History-Social Science Project

[Gouverneur Morris](#) Bill of Rights Institute

Middle School

[Preamble – Words We Live By: Your Annotated Guide to the Constitution](#) Engage NY

High School

[ELA Reading Informational Text \(see pages 48–49\)](#) Illinois State Board of Education



Definitions at Vocabulary.com

Words and definitions important for reading the Constitution:

- [Preamble](#)
- [Bill of Rights I](#)
- [Bill of Rights II](#)
- [Amendments XI–XXVII](#)